

Remarks

The Applicants have amended independent Claims 1 and 24 to include subject matter from original Claims 2-4. Claims 4 and 26 have accordingly been cancelled.

Entry of the above amendments into the official file and consideration on the merits are respectfully requested inasmuch as the subject matter of amended Claims 1 and 24 has already been the subject of examination by virtue of their inclusion in originally considered claims.

Claims 1, 4 and 19-23 stand rejected under 35 USC §102 over US '507. The Applicants respectfully submit that US '507 fails to explicitly or implicitly disclose the subject matter of those claims.

The rejection states that US '507 discloses in col. 3, lines 1-50 that either of the first and second FRP layers is formed as a lower-strength FRP layer, and the lower-strength FRP layer forms a crushable structure at the time of collision with a pedestrian, wherein differences in strength are provided by one or two or more differences selected from the group consisting of a difference in amount of reinforcing fibers, a difference in property of reinforcing fibers and a difference in orientation of reinforcing fibers, and wherein each of the FRP layers is formed integrally as an FRP solid plate, and a high breaking elongation layer is provided to the lower-strength FRP layer.

However, although US '507 discloses two FRP layers, namely, bonnets for automobiles in which the FRP outer and the FRP inner are bonded to each other, US '507 does not implicitly or explicitly disclose providing a difference in strength between the outer and the inner layers, US '507 provides a difference in rigidity in a single outer layer by providing to an outer edge of the outer layer a rigidity higher than that of a central section of the outer layer. This is, however, completely different from the Applicants' approach in that a difference in strength is provided between two FRP layers (each of the FRP layer(s) is a solid plate as defined in Claim 1).

There is another problem with US '507. "Rigidity" and "strength" referred to by the Applicants and in US '507 are terms/properties completely different from each other. "Rigidity" is a property with respect to hardness to be deformed. "Strength" is a property with respect to hardness to be broken. Further, the main purpose of US '507 is to make the central section of the outer layer thinner and to remove the bad influence/impact due to the presence of a bonding line and is, in any event, different from that of the Applicants'. Moreover, even if only the outer

layer is paid attention to in US '507, there is no disclosure in US '507 as to, for example, the structure shown in its Fig. 2, a difference in strength is provided between the main body of outer layer (2a) and the additional layer (not labeled) added to the outer main body (2a) in the region of high-rigidity portion (4a).

Therefore, there is no disclosure in US '507 as to a difference in strength provided between two FRP layers and further as to providing a difference in the amount of reinforcing fibers, a difference in properties of the reinforcing fibers or a difference in the orientation of the reinforcing fibers. The Applicants therefore respectfully submit that US '507 fails to explicitly or implicitly disclose every feature of those claims. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 15-17, 24, 26, 31 and 32 stand rejected under 35 USC §103 over the combination of US '496 with US '507. The Applicants respectfully submit that the combination fails to result in the subject matter of those claims.

The Applicants have already established that US '507 is inapplicable to Claim 1. The same arguments apply to dependent Claims 15-17 and further apply to independent Claim 24 inasmuch as Claim 24 was amended to include the subject matter of Claims 2-4. Hence, the combination is also inapplicable to the combination of US '496 with US '507 with respect to Claims 26, 31 and 32. Hence, the combination would still fail to disclose, teach or suggest every feature as recited in Claims 15-17, 24, 26, 31 and 32. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

In light of the foregoing, the Applicants respectfully submit that the entire application is now in condition for allowance, which is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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